CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

Interest in issues of organisational learning and information management on the part of academics and the practitioners increased dramatically over a period of time. On the practical side, globalisation and increased competition brought the issues of organisations like libraries and information centres to adopt themselves to the new situations. Latest developments in computing and information technology enabled the retention and transfer of information in organisations on larger size than was once possible. Information or knowledge is deemed to be a social wealth. The benefit of this social wealth has to be made available to the needy user of the society. This social wealth is available in variety of forms and contents. It is proved that the information flow in various fields is phenomenal and such generated information is used to refine newer information. Doyle \(^1\) mentioned that the society itself has undergone significant changes at various periods. These changes can be categorised in to four groups. They are;

a) Agrarian society

In this society the work- force was predominantly from the agricultural class and their activities were mainly concerned with agriculture.

b) Industrial Society

In this society work force was predominantly from the manufacturing class.
c) Service Society

A society where the work-force is predominantly from the service class; and we can add the latest developments taken place in computer technology and the impact of information technology on information revolution. This paved the way for a fourth society called information/knowledge based society.

d) Information society

Present society is information society where the information is predominantly playing its role in decision-making process and every individual is dependent on right information for his/her timely use to promote his/her activities. This can be called a fourth type of the society and be named ‘information society’. The cycle of society over a period of time is presented in the Figure no.1.1

Figure no.1.1
Cycle of society over a period of time

Source: Doyle ² : Value-Based Marketing. New York, John Wiley and Sons, 2000. Pg.6
(Revised and modified version)
1.1.1 Importance of Information

Today society is fully dependent as well as interdependent. Every productive activity linked with utility of available information wealth. Depending on the "need", the systems and services have been designed to make the activities creative and competitive. The competitive edge further sharpened the mankind to absorb and apply the available information wealth to the field of activity to overcome the challenges. A socio-economic development of a society is based on the availability of rich information and information sources and its wise use and application. The industrial revolution transformed the activities in all walks of life. It paved the way to the lives of various societies of the world to compete and emerge victorious. The true competency is integral part of the utility of various types of available information or knowledge.

The new millennium rightly branded as information or knowledge "bound" millennium. Keeping in view the value and importance of this information, the Governments of the world recognized to set up the information systems in various disciplines to facilitate the users with proper information. Such information systems cater to various requirements to their clientele base to bring transformations in the field of activities. The National and International Information Systems are working tirelessly to intensify the identification, collection, organisation and dissemination of the information to the respective clientele. The information flood made the scientist to work hard to streamline the activities to overcome from various barriers. The advent and application of computer technology made a revolutionary impact on information control and retrievals. The application of computer in controlling
information is indeed a remarkable success in respect of usage and time. The convergence of communication technology and information technology are the base of the success stories of the new millennium.

1.1.2 Post-Industrial Revolution

Frings ³ mentioned that “the industrial revolution triggered a self-supporting manufacturing and retailing cycle”. The post industrial revolution made remarkable contribution on inventions and innovations. The Research and Development kept generating the newer and newer information in various subjects’ areas. The task of making such first hand information to be delivered to the needy became thinkable. The information scientists were actively involved in controlling and transforming the raw information to usable form. The information services like indexing, abstracting, current awareness, selective dissemination of information, translation, reprography services etc were applied to streamline the information delivery. The late 1970s onwards the idea of pooling the information in the given form had been strongly felt by various organisations.

1.2 Role of Information in Fashion Industry

The concept of fashion and fashion design technology is a recent origin and the importance of its contribution in any nation building activities are felt by the nations across the globe, this has necessitated the present study on design and development of strong information system in the field of fashion design technology.
The standardisation through quality consciousness made the fashion business a key player in national development. The contribution of foreign exchange earnings made by the industry is enormous. The feeling of information requirement to the industry is gaining importance day by day. Hence the design of information system to cater the information requirement of the industry is felt in the larger interest of the nation.

Frings further mentioned that the communications, leisure activities, labour conditions, and industrial technology have a continuing effect on fashion. The impact of information flow on fashion and fashion designing is visible due to the proliferation of television channels, fashion shows, number of fashion publications. Airing of fashion information through radio networks, movement of people across the world, availability of fabulous fashion fabrics, fashion accessories, fashion jewelleries and many more made the dramatic change on the lifestyle of the people. The accessibility to fashion and fashion information sources brought in the competition in the manufacturing world to compete over the other, and this gives rise to the development of training institutes and information canters to support the changed environment.

Choo (1998) proposes a general model of how individuals need, seek and use information, which emphasise key points from various information behaviour theories presented from time to time. A general model of information use is presented in the Figure no.1.2.1
This model examines information need and use behaviour at the individual level. Here individuals are engaged in interactive cycles of activity, which comprises three stages. They are;

1) Information need: where individuals recognise gaps in their states of knowledge and in their ability to make sense of an experience;
2) Information seeking: where information needs are articulated as questions or topics that guide the choosing; and
3) Information use; which involves the selection and processing of information and its utility.
1.3 Fashion Information Scene in India

Though there are various information systems and services existing in the country, the infrastructure is insufficient to meet the upcoming user community in the field of fashion design technology. The increasing participation of clothing and fashion industry in information seeking is encouraging. The establishment of “National Institute of Fashion technology” and the introduction of “Technology Upgradation Scheme” (TUS) for clothing industry by Government of India to modernise the industry is a right choice to prepare to face the competition successfully in post quota era in fashion business world, which will be phased out by end of the year 2004. The fashion and clothing industry to be served with design and development of better information infrastructure to bring the industry on competitive edge. Today Fashion is big business in globalised world so also in India with NIFT taking the mantle to prepare the industry with providing requisite technological input and trained manpower along with the information on latest developments in the field through its in-house publication “Fashion and Beyond”, conducting seminars and workshops, participating in exhibitions, fashion fairs and fashion shows etc. With its new role, the fashion and apparel industry in India with complex component parts, the design; production and distribution are of highly complex and emerged as a multibillion-dollar industry with the assistance of NIFT, a sole quality manpower training institute in the country. The industry began as small entrepreneur at the turn of the century, and today it is a huge and multi faceted enterprise.
Frings ⁶ argues that “consumer spending, the state of the economy, the international money market, and labor costs have an effect on fashion marketing”. The industry employs greatly diversified skills and talents of millions of people, offers multitudinous mix of products, and absorbs a considerable portion on consumer spending and play the vital role in the economy. The fashion is a business of curious and exciting controls. The design and development of information system and services is felt strongly. The study includes with proposing information system development to meet the immediate needs of the industry to face the competition. The study has also focused on long-term strategy of sustenance with strong information base to beat the market through face lifting action.

1.4 Globalized Information and Changing Social Environment

Today’s society is rightly called a “globalized information society”. The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization⁷ mentioned that the “globalized information society brought system of modernity which is inherently globalizing and this is evident in some of the most basic characteristics of modern institutions”. Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away. Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. The development of
globalized information social relations probably serves to diminish some aspects of nationalistic feelings.

David and McGrew mentioned, that, “the global operations of the economy are sapping the foundations of national economics and social values. In such a situation the “influence” of culture and traditions of one on another bound to happen”. In changed social environment the local issues have taken a back seat and the behavioural aspect of mankind changed dramatically. The impact of communication and information technology brought the entire world into a global village. Such connectivity among the nations polarized the culture and traditions of the nations. As economists rightly called the human wants are unlimited, the improvised facilities furthered the ambitions of humanity in a society to crave for more and more wealth.

The impact of free flow of information across the countries brought “cross cultured global information society”. The human needs are re-shaped according to the changed taste. To possess what one desire is ready to strive for it with available information base and facility to access. David and McGrew further argue that “over the last decade the phenomenon of globalisation – whether real or illusory has captured the public imagination”. In an epoch of profound and unsettling global change in which traditional ideologies and grand theories appear to offer little purchase on the world, and the idea of globalised information has acquired the mantle of new paradigm. The concept acquired intellectual supremacy within the society, which made tremendous impact on taste and behaviour of mankind.
1.4.1 Globalised Information: Vision for Change

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization\(^1\) reports that “the public debate on globalisation is at an impasse. Opinion is frozen in the ideological certainties of entrenched position and fragmented in a variety of social interest. It is observed that the “will” for consensus is weak. Key international negotiation is deadlocked and international developmental commitment is unfulfilled”. This situation made to incorporate the concerns and aspirations of people. The benefit of globalisation can be extended to more people and better shared between the participant countries. The resources and means are at the hands. The process of globalization with strong social dimension based on universally shared values and respect for human rights and individual dignity of all citizens of the various societies.

1.4.2 Globalised Information: A Focus on People

Success of Globalised Information Society lies in meeting the demands of all people like respect to their right, cultural identity, decent work, empowerment of local communities and equality. It should have a capability to manage integration into the globalised information society and provide socio-economic opportunity and security. The process made an impact on wider and more democratic participation of people through various systems like Government, Labour, Civil society, business etc.
1.4.3 Globalised Information and National Culture

David and McGrew \textsuperscript{11} highlighted that "the movement of cultures is linked with the movement of people". The earliest movements of people took their culture with them across regions and continents. Thus the culture is globalised, the history and world religions showed how ideas and beliefs can cross the continents and transform societies. It is how the "global cultural communications" developed. The twentieth century witnessed the wave of new technological revolutions in communications and transportation along with transformation of old technologies which together generated and opened up massive series of communication channel across the globe. The domestic and international level, cultures, society and economics became more information dense. This pave the way for new global communication system for socio, cultural and trade purposes.

1.4.4 Globalised Information and Fashion Design Technology

Fringes \textsuperscript{12} mentioned, "During the 1980s, fashion evolved into a global phenomenon". Any sphere of activity in society depends on availability of right information and its timely use. The impact made by the liberalisation and globalisation on Fashion and Fashion related activities in India are visible. Late 1980s witnessed the visibility of the word fashion and fashion design, which was unheard off. With the establishment of \textbf{National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)} in the year 1987, at New Delhi, by Ministry of Textiles, Government of
India gave a new dimension to Fashion and Fashion Designing, Apparel Market and Merchandising, Garment Export, Employment generation, Foreign exchange earnings etc. The institute earnestly began to serve the nation with trained manpower, assistance to Fashion and Garment Industry to imbibe the modernity to take on the global competition with preparedness through imparting quality education and training.

The beaming of fashion shows on television networks made it possible for the fashion designers, fashion merchandisers, fashion buying houses, fashion producers and others to view and understand the movement of fashion in the market-national and global.

The Resource Centres of the National Institute of Fashion Technology are the repositories of fashion and fashion design information and the resources accessible to the professional players to imbibe the fashion trend information for their day-to-day activities. Resource Centres of NIFT are the information base for success story of Fashion and Fashion Design education in India, which always strives to give the best to the professionals and to the fashion design and technology business of the country.

1.5 Evolution of Fashion over a Period of Time

The term fashion is vague, and used loosely in day-to-day life. It is a familiar connotation. However the meaning is defined differently in different occasions.
The Fairchild Dictionary of Textiles (1985) defined that "fashion is a prevailing style or mode in dress; also in fabric (colour, and texture) contrast with style".

Webster’s Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary (1994) fashion is “a prevailing custom or style of dress”.

Thus fashion is a reflection of the social, political and economic and artistic forces of any given time. The changing styles that evolve from these forces speak of history of fashion. Frings mentioned that "dressing room mirrors throughout the ages have reflected the trends in how people think, live and lead their life. Fashion is much more than clothes, and humans may simply the ‘animals born naked’ but they need clothes to protect themselves from heat and cold, rain, snow and sun.” From the dawn of history clothes are also been used as decoration and as a way of making people different from each other.

Until 19th century there were regulations dictating who could wear which kind of cloths, indicating the sign of social differences. Breaching these rules was punishable. Fashion began when people take pleasure in dressing up. Fashion is poised between the consumerism and art, as wearing the fashionable clothes is an art, just because such clothes are made up of beautiful things such as colours, lines, and shapes.

Haute Couture, the “high art of sewing” came in to existence in 19th century and still have importance as a medium of advertising and the reputation of great fashion houses across the world. Lehnert pointed out in his book that “a report in French Vogue 1997, Haute Couture makes up just 6 percent of total fashion sale; and the rest is made
up of licences and ready to wear clothes." A sample of Haute Couture outfit presented in the Figure no.1.5.1

Pret-a-Porter is a French term taken from American “Ready-to-Wear” clothes emerged strongly in the market after 1960s. Pret-a-Porter outfit sample profile presented in Figure no.1.5.2.

Source: Lehnert 18, A History of Fashion in the 20th Century. Germany, Konemann, 2000 Pg.23
Lehnert 19 mentioned that, “during the 20th century there was a tremendous development in all fields like science and technology, international relations social structures, trade and commerce, politics etc and fashion was no exception; indeed the 20th century was a century of fashion revolution. Styles and shapes of clothes became fundamentally different from those of earlier times.”

Though fashion is a relatively new concept to the general public, it has its own history and changing faces from time to time. In ancient and medieval times, clothing styles remained practically unchanged. Fashion change got accelerated during the Renaissance, as western civilisation discovered different cultures, customs and costumes. As new fabrics and ideas became available people craved more new things and the pace of fashion change has continued to increase. The increase in the speed with which practices and habits changed, with explosion of political economy the style of clothing drastically took new shape. After 1750 in parallel with proliferation of economic books and journals and collections of fashion, economists began to reflect on sartorial luxury and on the role of the consumption, vehicle of wealth creation and of clothing.

In 1770 some criticism published on fashion, and Roche 20 reports in his book that “Bonnaud criticised in his article on ‘the degradation of the human species through the demeaning use of whalebone.” Roch 21 again mentioned in his book that in the journal de l’ agriculture; in 1779 “Gauther, cure of Savigny, brought out his Traite contre l’amaur des parures et le luxe des habits, 220 pagges of
fulminations.” Roch further reports that in 1780, Saint Vallier wrote “a Discours sur les modes.” These are the few criticism on excesses of female fashion during those days. However as time passed the fashion was recognised as luxury and which involved the creativity and reorganisation with functional outfits.

1.5.3 **Fashion Dictated by Royalty**

Until the Industrial revolution, people belong to one of the two main classes: the wealthy landlords or the poor labours and farmers. Wealth was concentrated with landlords these people were the only ones who could afford to wear fashionable clothes. Royalty, at the top of both the social and economic ladders. At the turn of the 18th century the textile industry grew in various countries and the supply of quality fabrics, ribbons etc. and the Apparel manufacturers sponsored by the wealthy, developed their skills to high level using these fabulous materials.

1.5.4 **The Origin of Dress**

The earliest pictorial records of clothing are found in prehistoric cave paintings from the old stone age some 30,000 years ago, mentioned by Tortora observed that the “clothing appeared to have taken the form of draped skirts, cut and sewn trousers probably all of made from skins.”

Tortora further mentioned that the “psychologists and sociologists have identified the reasons for wearing clothes” they are
i) For protection of body  
ii) For decoration of body  
iii) Out of Modesty and  
iv) To denote status.

1.5.5 Functions of Dress

Throughout the history clothing can and has served many purposes. It has served to differentiate between the sexes, designate Age, Marital and Socio-economic status, Occupation and other special roles that individuals played.

From the crude garment of prehistory to the studied harmony of ancient costumes, Middle ages to fanciful and refined garb of modern time, human beings over the millennia have had their disposal every possible resource – natural and man-made along with possible form, colour and fabric. In the vast historic panorama of information sources available for study, the cycle of fashion took different shape and form as time passes.

1.6 Need for the Study

In the present Information age, it is strongly recognised that information and its associated activities are playing predominant role in socio-economic development of any country. A nation, which does not keep pace with the latest advances in information and communication technologies, will be sidelined by others in the main stream of
globalisation. The present study tresses on designing a systematic information system for professional players like Designers, Quality Controllers, Production Managers, Export houses etc. in Apparel and Garment Industry. The "Post Quota Policy" kept the Fashion and Fashion Industry out of protection. The slogan "Survival of the fittest" is the mantra for success in future scenario in the field of fashion design technology.

To achieve the competitive edge in a globalised economy the role of information "haves" is widely accepted in each fields. "Fashion Design Technology" is not an exception to this trend. The value of information and its currency and application to the design industry is well recognised. Realising the importance of information and its timely delivery to the user community with the help of the well organised 'Fashion Design Information System' would help the industry to grow faster while evolving quality consciousness to compete and sustain in the global competition leading to socio-economic development of the country.

The human resource development is critically dependent upon the right information at right time and it is more true in the field of fashion design technology, as the forecasted fashion information be delivered in advance to the needy to prepare and to take challenges in the globalised competition. India is a developing country and the fashion and fashion related activities created more job opportunities and contributing lion share of the foreign exchange earnings. Against this background, the need for an efficient and effective information system for fashion design technology is felt in this study.
1.7 Statement of the Problem

Havingrealisingtheneedforthestudyandlookingatthe vitalroleofinformationfordevelopmentthestudy"InformationSystem andServicesofFashionDesignTechnology:Astudywithspecial reference to India", is selected for research investigation.

Anattemptismadeinthisresearchworktodevelopthe information,akindofintegratedsystemswhichcanreplacethepresent systemworkingisinolationandnotreachingtheentireprofessionaluser community, and to activate them to play a key role in national development. The study is conducted to formulate a strong information system to bring the Fashion Industry in India on a global map and serving the industry with ready information.

1.8 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study;

1.8.1 To assess the present scenario of Information Resource Centres in fashion design technology institutes;
1.8.2 To examine the suitability of present information delivery system in the context of the growing information needs;
1.8.3 To identity changing information needs of the different user community concerned to fashion design technology;
1.8.4 To propose a comprehensive information system to bring the user community to strong information hub with
integrating the present systems and formulating National and Regional Information System.

1.8.5 To examine the possibility of IT application in promoting the faster information access and use;

1.8.6 To project the role of NIFT Resource Centres (RCs) in the process of National Development;

1.9 Methodology

Multiple investigation methods and data collection tools and techniques are employed in the study. Different methods are applied in a helpful sequence so as to supplement and complement the preceding method. At the same time all methods are directed towards the core problem so as to depict different perspectives. The three main methods viz., 1) Questionnaire 2) Interview and 3) Observation methods are used for collecting the data.

There has been a wealth of documentary sources available giving the details of the ‘information systems and services’ in various disciplines other than the present topic. The available studies have been comprehensively reviewed in the second chapter with the help of the documentary and non-documentary sources.

1.9.1 Questionnaire Method

There are seven centres of National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFTs) spread across the country mainly in the cities where the art and crafts and garment industries existed. Questionnaires have
been mailed to all seven centres and the responses received are analysed and interpreted in chapter five.

1.9.2 Interview Method

Open-ended interviews were held with the selected samples. The approach employed to ensure that the areas of information system and services of fashion design technology considered relevant would be discussed with the respondents.

1.9.3 Observation Method

All seven centres of NIFT are visited to collect the data needed for the study. Notes from discussions were taken, and meetings with different Resource Centre users and Head Librarians and also industry members were encouraging and helpful. The personal experience of the researcher as a convener of the Library Committee and also member of the Local Academic Standard Committee helped in the process of analysis of data. These notes of the meetings are taken into consideration as and when needed while analysing the data.

1.10 Limitations

The information awareness in fashion design technology is of the recent origin. In India, this has gained the momentum with the starting of NIFT centres. Hence the study of “Information System and Services of Fashion Design Technology: A Study with special reference to
India is confined to the seven centres of National Institute of Fashion Technology in India. The very limited studies in this regard failed to throw the light on the investigation. Most of the models, approaches are taken from the systems and networks operating in other fields.

1.11 Conspectus

The thesis has been divided into seven chapters;

Chapter one explain the concept of Fashion and Fashion Design in changing social environment. It highlights the evolution of fashion over a period of time. Objective and methodology indicting the limitations of the study are stated; Chapter two give the review of the related literature; Chapter three traces the origin and growth of NIFT centres in India. Objectives, functions, responsibilities are briefly mentioned. The role of NIFT centres in socio-economic development of the country is also outlined; Chapter four deals with impact of information technology on fashion designing and the subsequent changes to be noted are mentioned; Chapter five focuses on analysis of collected data; Chapter six proposes the “information system for fashion design technology” for the country and Chapter seven gives findings and conclusion of the study.
REFERENCES

2. Ibid, Page 6
4. Ibid, Page 12
9. Ibid, Page 6-8
17. Ibid, Page 14
18. Ibid, Page 23
19. Ibid, Page 8
21. Ibid, Page 44
22. Ibid, Page 44
24. Ibid, Page 1-4